

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

106th Congress
2nd Session

Vote No. 235

September 7, 2000, 3:52 p.m.
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CHINA TRADE/Clean Energy Technology

SUBJECT: United States-China Relations Act of 2000 . . . H.R. 4444. Byrd amendment No. 4115.

ACTION: AMENDMENT REJECTED, 32-64

SYNOPSIS: As introduced, H.R. 4444, the United States-China Relations Act of 2000, will allow the President to grant the People's Republic of China permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) status with the United States. (Normal trade relations status, which was formerly called most favored nation status, provides lower United States tariffs against foreign goods. China currently has normal trade relations status on a temporary basis.)

The Byrd amendment would require United States aid programs that assist United States individuals and businesses that are involved in China's environment and energy sector to support, to the maximum extent practicable, the transfer of United States clean energy technology as part of those programs. Such sums as necessary, consistent with the subsidy codes of the World Trade Organization, would be authorized to provide that assistance. The amendment would also express the sense of Congress that the People's Republic of China faces significant environmental and energy infrastructure development challenges, that it has been attempting to strengthen public health standards and to reduce environmental pollution, that the United States is a leader in a range of clean energy technologies, and that the United States should work with China to encourage the use of American-made clean energy technologies.

Those favoring the amendment contended:

This amendment should not be controversial. It is pro-business, pro-United States, and pro-environment. China is industrializing rapidly, and most of its energy is coming from coal. According to a study by the Electric Power Research Institute, China is now the largest producer and user of coal, and it will add as many as 180 new electric powerplants per year for the next 20 years, 75 percent of which will be coal-fired. China is not using modern, clean-coal technologies, and it is having tremendous pollution problems as a result. We note for people who believe in the global warming theory that China's new power plants will greatly add

(See other side)

YEAS (32)		NAYS (64)		NOT VOTING (4)	
Republicans (17 or 32%)	Democrats (15 or 35%)	Republicans (36 or 68%)	Democrats (28 or 65%)	Republicans (1)	Democrats (3)
Bunning	Byrd	Abraham	Hagel	Murkowski ⁻²	Akaka ⁻²
Burns	Daschle	Allard	Hatch		Boxer ⁻²
Campbell	Dorgan	Ashcroft	Hutchinson		Lieberman ⁻²
Collins	Edwards	Bennett	Hutchison		
Craig	Feingold	Bond	Kyl		
Gregg	Harkin	Brownback	Lott		
Helms	Hollings	Chafee	Lugar		
Inhofe	Kennedy	Cochran	Mack		
Jeffords	Kohl	Crapo	McCain		
McConnell	Leahy	DeWine	Nickles		
Santorum	Mikulski	Domenici	Roberts		
Smith, Bob	Rockefeller	Enzi	Roth		
Snowe	Sarbanes	Fitzgerald	Sessions		
Specter	Torricelli	Frist	Shelby		
Stevens	Wellstone	Gorton	Smith, Gordon		
Thompson		Gramm	Thomas		
Thurmond		Grams	Voinovich		
		Grassley	Warner		
			Baucus		
			Bayh		
			Biden		
			Bingaman		
			Breaux		
			Bryan		
			Cleland		
			Conrad		
			Dodd		
			Durbin		
			Feinstein		
			Graham		
			Inouye		
			Johnson		
			Kerrey		
			Kerry		
			Landrieu		
			Lautenberg		
			Levin		
			Lincoln		
			Miller		
			Moynihan		
			Murray		
			Reed		
			Reid		
			Robb		
			Schumer		
			Wyden		
				EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:	
				1—Official Business	
				2—Necessarily Absent	
				3—Illness	
				4—Other	
				SYMBOLS:	
				AY—Announced Yea	
				AN—Announced Nay	
				PY—Paired Yea	
				PN—Paired Nay	

Compiled and written by the staff of the Republican Policy Committee—Larry E. Craig, Chairman

to the carbon emissions which are said to cause global warming. Nearly all of the growth in carbon emissions around the world is coming from developing countries. Carbon emissions from developed countries, on the other hand, are being controlled by advanced technologies. Coal use in the United States has tripled since 1970 but overall emissions are down substantially. China understands that if it does not remedy matters soon its citizens may end up with serious health problems that could cripple its economic growth. United States companies have the technological know-how and China has the need; this amendment would encourage getting American businesses involved in filling that need. The environment would benefit, China would benefit, and United States businesses would benefit.

Nevertheless, Senators say that they will oppose this amendment. They agree with the amendment's purpose; they agree that it would be beneficial; they agree that no argument lies against it on substance. They oppose it solely because adding it to the bill would make the Senate-passed version of the bill different than the House-passed version, so a conference would be required to resolve the difference. Our colleagues say that requiring a conference could result in delays that would kill the bill for this year. That argument is nonsense. We have not tried to delay matters--we can see that the writing is on the wall. PNTR for China has the backing of too many powerful interests to be defeated. Though we oppose PNTR, we realize we are in a minority. Our purpose in offering amendments is only to make a bad bill better. At the end of a legislative session, parliamentary ways can be found to get major bills passed quickly. Going to a conference on this bill would not result in its defeat--it would still pass, but with the addition of amendments such as the Byrd amendment, it would pass in an improved form.

The idea that we cannot vote for amendments in the Senate because a bill may then be delayed is wholly foreign to our representative form of government. Senators were not elected to represent their constituents only when they were not in a hurry to pass a major bill--they were elected to represent them at all times. We urge our colleagues not, in the interests of expediency, to relinquish their right and duty to amend legislation. We urge them to support this clearly meritorious amendment.

Those opposing the amendment contended:

We are wholly sympathetic with the purpose of this amendment, but, as we have explained on previous votes, we cannot risk amending this bill. If the Senate passes this bill with even the slightest deviation from the form in which it was received from the House then a conference will be required to resolve the difference. Votes will then have to be held on the conference report. The House, right before an election, may not be able to round up enough votes to again pass this bill. Also, requiring a conference will introduce many new opportunities for delay that Members could use to prevent votes from occurring on the conference report before sine die adjournment. A vote for this amendment, or any other amendment, therefore, could easily kill this bill. We will not take that chance. Therefore, with reluctance, we must vote against the Byrd amendment.